

CHAPTER VI – MEMBER RETENTION

A. GENERAL.

1. It cannot be repeated too often that recruiting and retention are everyone's job! This means that every member and every officer at all levels must be involved. The key to retention is involvement.
2. Member Involvement Plan - Every member of a flotilla should have the opportunity to review this plan. It is a tool to be utilized by the interviewer (FSO-PS or FSO-MT) to facilitate discussion of the activities and service opportunities available to all Auxiliarists. It will help the individual member to visualize the process necessary to attain their personal involvement goals so that he or she can make an informed choice and a commitment for service.
3. Divisions and Districts should provide the direction for effective and adequate training programs. Division elected and appointed officers need to direct and inspire top-notch Division and Flotilla Member Training programs. The Personnel Staff Officers can suggest, encourage, cooperate and assist other staff officers in programs that will attract and hold members. They cannot, however, take over the responsibilities of others.

B. SOME INDICATORS OF FLOTILLA HEALTH.

1. The amount of activity or involvement of members is the true indicator of the strength and vitality of a flotilla.
2. Some of the signs of a healthy flotilla are:
 - a. Addition of new members each year.
 - b. A happy blend of fun and service.
 - c. All members wear the proper uniforms with pride.
 - d. Many members are present at the flotilla meetings and many also attend division and district functions.
 - e. Flotilla objectives and goals are established that are in line with the Auxiliary and its purposes. Individual motivation is high.
 - f. Flotilla staff meets on a regular basis.
 - g. Oral staff reports are given at flotilla meetings. An effort is made to obtain reports from absent staff officers.

- h. Meeting agendas are planned and executed to encourage and attract attendance.
- i. The flotilla is always represented at Division Board meetings. Information from these meetings is promptly and accurately relayed to the flotilla members.
- j. Training programs are frequently scheduled in conjunction with meetings.
- k. There is an ongoing program for attracting and processing new members.
- l. The elected leaders understand and utilize the principles of good leadership and administration.
- m. Members have positive and optimistic attitudes.
- n. The joy of working together is evident.
- o. All members are actively involved in recruiting new members. The retention of current members is high.

C. THE FSO– PS CAN HELP TO KEEP MORALE HIGH.

- 1. People join the Auxiliary to learn something and to do something.
 - a. Help members learn by:
 - (1) Promoting and advertising training classes.
 - (2) Fostering the concept of long-term involvement and encouraging members to prepare for leadership by training for the future.
 - b. Help members do something by:
 - (1) Encouraging use of crew available lists.
 - (2) Encouraging members to help train others.
 - (3) Spreading the word on advanced training opportunities and the need for aides and other helpers to support flotilla activities.
 - (4) Recruiting members for CME booths, boat shows, Public Affairs projects, and fellowship events.
 - (5) Monitoring participation with the help of the Information Systems Officer and encouraging inactive members to get involved.

2. The FSO– PS acts as the Flotilla Morale Officer.
 - a. The FSO– PS acts as the Flotilla Morale Officer by:
 - (1) Processing the complaints and dissatisfactions of members and working to turn them into diplomatic requests for change.
 - (2) Strengthening flotilla morale in many ways:
 - (a) Freely uses words of praise and acknowledgment.
 - (b) Says “THANK YOU” and “WELL DONE” in the flotilla publication.
 - (c) Recognizes birthdays and anniversaries.
 - (d) Works to protect members from the formation of cliques.
 - (e) Helps keep mission activities alive and well.
 - (3) Helping members who appear to be dropping out.
 - (a) Interviews and counsels members who are losing interest, and works to get them happy and active again.
 - (b) Assists members who wish to transfer.
 - (c) Helps members who request disenrollment or former members to return to active status.
 - b. As a Morale Officer, the FSO–PS encourages new members with one arm of friendship, and does the same for current members with the other arm.

D. THE FSO– PS PROMOTES FLOTILLA HOSPITALITY.

1. The FSO– PS arrives early at the meeting place.
2. Checks on flags, room setup, snacks, coffee, flowers, etc.
3. Makes a friendly greeting to each person upon arrival or asks a different member to be the "Official Greeter" at each meeting or activity.
4. Gives visiting officials special attention, making sure they are not left alone.
5. Gives a special welcome to members who have been absent or ill.
6. Gives guests special attention. Preplans with designated members on seating arrangements. Places guests with happy and experienced members, so they will feel comfortable. In so doing, it will emphasize their importance and make the follow up easier. Stress fellowship and the warm relationship among the flotilla members. Members should introduce themselves to guests.
7. Keeps new members comfortable and part of the group. Encourages them to take advanced classes so they can participate more. Keeps them posted as to these classes.

8. Recognizes members' special events. Many organizations have a special "sunshine secretary" who mails out greeting cards for members' birthdays, anniversaries and for those who are ill. The flotilla may have a member assigned to do this, or the FSO- PS may do the job. It serves an important function and someone should be doing this for the flotilla.
9. Uses the flotilla publication to praise and compliment members.
10. Makes sure members feel free to express themselves, either pro or con. Their opinion does matter!
11. Is a good listener.
12. Fellowship is the glue that holds the flotilla together. Some additional thoughts on FELLOWSHIP are shown in Enclosure (6).

E. THE PERSONNEL OFFICER IS THE COORDINATOR OF THE RETENTION TEAM

1. A team effort is needed at all levels in the Auxiliary to motivate and maximize retention efforts. At the flotilla level, the core of the Retention Team consists of the FC, VFC, FSO-MT and FSO-PS. All other staff officers serve in a supportive role in the Retention Plan developed by the core team.
 - a. Determine the level of participation of your present members, number of trained members in each mission activity and discuss the past reasons for disenrollments. Consult the FSO-IS.
 - b. Use the Annual Membership Survey (Enclosure (4)) to determine your members' training needs, fellowship ideas, opinion of flotilla meetings, relationship with the Coast Guard and Division, and member expectations. Present its importance at a flotilla meeting and mail to those members not present. Emphasize full participation, candid responses and be open to suggestions.
 - c. Develop a Member Training Schedule - Using the information from the survey and a sign-up sheet for training desired, develop a training schedule for the entire year. Auxiliarists are busy people. If they know ahead of time when training will be available, they can schedule for it. Line up instructors and schedule QEs ahead of time and work toward that date for completion of training. Include leadership training, qualifications and AUXOP training.
 - d. Publish a Newsletter and send out minutes from your meetings. Publish survey trends. Communication is important to retention. Keep your members informed. Make sure your articles are positive and uplifting; recognize accomplishments, exciting upcoming events, personal congratulations, etc. A newsletter that makes your flotilla look good and will make your members feel good about their service.

- e. Plan a calendar of meeting and fellowship events. Plan meeting agendas on a quarterly basis so your members know why they are coming to each meeting. Make it interesting, plan your fun - see what your members want to do and schedule dates ahead of time.
- f. Create a "Suggestion System" - The FSO-PS should be a "people person" and should be able to handle this. Your members need to know, if they have a problem, they can talk it over with an objective listener who will help direct them through proper channels to effect a solution. This can be done in a way that should turn a negative complaint into a positive solution.
- g. Formalize your Retention Plan - The VFC and FSO-PS should take charge of the membership survey and its feedback. The Retention Team should submit, in writing, a list of the activities planned. Make sure that training schedules, meeting, fellowship events and newsletter articles are planned and executed.
- h. There is no limit to the activities that can be planned by the Retention Team. Keeping all other staff officers involved in the plan is very important. The goal is involvement of all members at a level appropriate to their available time and talents. Involved members are retained members.



***REMEMBER
THE VOLUNTEERS'
"PAYCHECK"***

